**Action Plan**

The task is to design and make an early learning product that is educational and interesting for children to use. Weihen (2007) explains that child centred learning theorist, Friedrich Froebel, believed that children learn from playing and doing, and this is widely used in education today (p.185).

A number of factors will influence the decision of what activity to make.

Weihen (2007) explains that children learn through imitation, exploring and experiencing the environment; interacting with people; observation of others or direct instruction (p.60). The activity needs to employ one of these main ways of learning to engage the child.

It is important to match the play activities with the developmental level. Toddlers are becoming more interested in play and activities because they are mobile and very energetic. As toddlers do not have access to pre-school, their play activities are very important for foundation learning of basic skills, physical, social and cognitive. Suitable activities include ball games, sand and water play, dress ups, simple construction, story telling and feely box to name a few.

Many commercial products are very expensive and can be out of the reach of young families. The product needs to be relatively inexpensive to construct.

Every product which is made for children needs to consider the safety requirements. Young children put everything in their mouths so the activity needs to have no small parts which can be a choking hazard and needs to be able to be cleaned regularly and thoroughly to prevent contamination.

The activity that has been decided on is a shapes box. This activity is of the exploration type, allowing the children to experiment with trying to fit objects into cut out shapes on the sides of a box. It is suitable for children from the age of one year to pre-school. The younger ones can simply shake the box, the toddlers can be helped to fit the shapes into the holes and pre schoolers can be totally self sufficient in their play. It is inexpensive, using recycled materials. Similar commercial products sell for over $50. It will be covered with contact so can be easily cleaned and will be non-toxic.

The activity requires a sturdy box and a number of small objects which are easy for a toddler to grasp, colourful contact and a craft knife. Shapes will be traced onto the sides of the box and cut out before covering with contact.

Word count: 400

**Bibliography:**

Weihen, L 2007 *Exploring Early Childhood* Heinemann, Victoria